

JUL 24 2000

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 80, No. 9 October 1998

Brewer and the Blackbird

by Harry Fuller

This common American Icterid was named for a prominent 19th century Boston ornithologist. Yet it is likely that Dr. Thomas Mayo Brewer never saw this bird in the field.

Brewer attended Harvard as an undergraduate and then got his medical degree there at the age of 24 in 1835. Though he spent the next few years as a practicing doctor, he abandoned that career for writing and politics. That apparently ran in the Brewer genes, his father had taken part on revolutionary politics, including the Boston Tea Party. Brewer became editor of a Whig newspaper, the "Boston Atlas." Later he became a partner in a printing firm. He died in 1880, at age 66.

Through his life birds were a passion with Dr. Brewer. As a teenager he began sharing his field observations with Audubon. In turn Audubon's Ornithological Biographies (1831-9) often cited Brewer, "My young friend Mr. T. M. Brewer says...."

At age 26 Brewer published an updated, inexpensive text of Alexander Wilson's American Ornithology.

Thus it is not surprising that Audubon named a bird after his young, expert collaborator. Audubon first saw this "new" blackbird in the summer of 1843 during his final expedition. He and several friends were on the upper Missouri River seeking new mammals for Audubon's new books on American quadrupeds. Audubon was done with his original bird volumes but new species kept appearing. This new blackbird was later drawn by Audubon and appeared in a new edition of his Ornithology, published in 1844. Audubon thought this was the first description of the bird he named Brewer's Blackbird. In fact, the species had first been described in 1829 by Johann Wagler from a specimen taken in Mexico. Audubon's scientific name was abandoned but the common name stuck.

After Audubon's death a new generation of American ornithologists dominated the mid-19th Century study of birds in this country. Four men were the acknowledged leaders: Brewer, Spencer Baird of the Smithsonian, George Lawrence, and John Cassin of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. Brewer, Baird and John

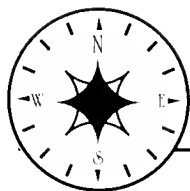
Continued on page 11

Christmas Bird Count Dates

**Mark your
calendars now!**

Oakland Christmas
Bird Count: Sunday,
December 20

San Francisco
Christmas Bird Count:
Tuesday, December 29
details in next
month's Gull. 



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

8:00 a.m. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241. See September Gull for details.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO.

8:a.m. Leader: Mark Eaton (415) 566-6767. E-mail: eaton@best.com. See September Gull for details.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, MINI TRIP TO EAST BAY SHORELINE.

9:30 a.m. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. See September Gull for details.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, ELEVENTH ANNUAL POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE ALL-DAY FALL BIRDING BLITZ

(Joint activity: GGAS & National Park Service.) Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Five Brooks Trailhead parking lot (about 3.5 miles south of Olema on Highway 1). This fast

paced multi-habitat trip covers the Five Brooks Pond area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock and Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley. producing approximately 100 species. Bring food, water, and layered clothing for variable weather. This year, commemorative T-shirts will be available for a modest fee. Call Cathy Purchis for information about the T-shirts. Leaders: Leon Abrams (415) 453-9980 (work), (510) 843-4107 (home); and Cathy Purchis (510) 865-9482. (*)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, SAN MATEO COAST.

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot of San Gregorio State Beach (near the junction of Highways 1 and 84). We will bird at Pescadero in the morning and Ano Nuevo in the afternoon. We will look for migrants, shorebirds and seabirds, including Marbled Murrelet and Black-vented Shearwater. Bring lunch and liquids and be prepared for cool weather. Heavy rain cancels. Beginners welcome. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. (\$)*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS (MARIN COUNTY).

Meet at 9:30 a.m. Take 101 north and exit at Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road. Go east on Smith Ranch Road, turn left just before the county park, and proceed to the entrance where parking is available. We will begin this trip by birding the

road before the parking lot. We should see a variety of wintering shorebirds and waterfowl on this joint GGAS and Sierra Club trip. Bring water and snacks. Trip will end by 1:00. Beginners welcome. Rain cancels. Leader: Jeffrey Black (510) 526-7068. (*)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several micro-habitats attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, SHIMADA FRIENDSHIP PARK AND RICHMOND MARINA.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Shimada Friendship Park parking lot in the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, for this half-day trip. From Oakland, take 80, then 580 towards the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Exit at Marina Bay Parkway. Turn left and take Marina Bay Parkway towards the Bay. The park in on Marina Bay Parkway, near its end. Marina Bay Parkway becomes Peninsula, and if you find yourself on Peninsula, you've gone too far. After exploring the area, plan on driving to the Richmond Marina. We should see loons, sea ducks (perhaps a

Harlequin Duck), shorebirds (Wandering Tattler if we're lucky) and marsh birds. Beginners welcome. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, MINI-TRIP TO AQUATIC PARK, BERKELEY, and other nearby areas. Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the northwest corner of Spenger's Restaurant parking lot (4th and Hearst St.) to carpool. We should see returning shorebirds and migratory ducks. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Beginners welcome. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, ARROWHEAD MARSH AND (ALAMEDA COUNTY).

Meet at 8 a.m. Take Hwy 880 (Nimitz) to the Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. Turn left after a block and take the dirt road to the second small parking lot on the left. On this half-day trip, we expect to see hundreds, perhaps thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl, perhaps Clapper Rail, as we explore the new wetlands which are the results of GGAS's efforts. Heavy rain cancels. Beginners welcome. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. *

PLAN AHEAD:

November 22, 1998, Cosumnes River Preserve. Leader: Jeff Black

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (*). Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger (even if a trip is not marked with an (*)), if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 236-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.

Neaded: New Editor

It has been a great two years being editor of the *Gull*. Interesting, challenging, educational, fun.....But, life has bitten another huge chunk out of my free time and I'm afraid I won't have the time it takes to do the newsletter well. So unfortunately, I have to give it up.

And so, GGAS is looking for someone who is interested in picking up where I will leave off as Editor of the *Gull*. It is produced on a monthly basis and comes equipped with many faithful contributors. It's a great and interesting way to be directly involved with your organization. If interested, please contact me, John Gibbons at (415) 621-3899 or the GGAS office at (510) 843-2222.

Gifts and Bequests

Ellen & Gunther Barth,
Don Denison, Patricia Fry
& Maura Ceccoli, Mary
Ellen Harte, Morton Paley,
Billie Tobey

Memorial:

Lucile Willis in memory of
Richard Duncan
Beverly Tucker & Kathleen
Williams in memory of
Richard Duncan

Birdathon:

Renate & Jan Smith

Birds of Honor:

Black Noddy - Stefanie
Arthur
Bristle-thighed Curlew -
Alan Hopkins

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



The Best Thing

by Corinne Stefanick

The best thing about teaching children about birds, is the excitement of the children. That was especially true of the second and third graders in Alameda we docent volunteers had the pleasure of meeting in May this year. They were bright, attentive, and enthused to find out about

Alameda's endangered Least Terns and other animals living at the new Alameda National Wildlife Refuge.

This was the first classroom program the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR) attempted, and it was a great success. We met our goal of bringing the refuge to the people after a frustrating year of not being allowed access to the former Naval Air Station to take the people to the refuge. Our 50 trained docents had eagerly looked forward to leading weekend tours at the closed airbase where the Least Terns nest each summer. They were losing interest after a year of hearing no from the U.S. Navy, so we turned our energies into planning a program we could take to the classroom. We chose second and third graders because our subject matter fitted perfectly with the California State Education guidelines for teaching science, and we knew we could easily approach the teachers directly.

Thanks to the experience and vision of FAWR chair Leora Feeney, Alameda butterfly expert Judy Lundy, and Paden School mentor teacher, Susanne Sharpnack, FAWR members designed an hour-long classroom presentation that included color slides, a hands-on "beach in a box," and lots of stimulating dialogue with the children. We were also fortunate to have help in curriculum design from educators John Steiner and Amy Hutzal of

the US Fish & Wildlife Service. When the program was finally ready in April, John Luther, biologist, teacher, and FAWR member, conducted a training session for our volunteers at the College of Alameda.

To get the word out to the classroom teachers, Judy and Bob Lundy personally stuffed their mailboxes with our invitation, and then the phone started ringing. Over 50 teachers responded with enthusiasm to our offer to visit their classrooms. After a "dress rehearsal" with our volunteers gathered around Leora's dining room table, we headed out in teams of two for appointments in the classrooms from May 11-22. We also supplied supplemental classroom materials for the teachers to use to prepare the children for the visit and to follow up with more hands-on projects. Each participating teacher will receive the Audubon Adventures package for use in the classroom this year, thanks to the generosity of the Golden Gate Audubon Society.

One of the best results from our first classroom experience was the hand-printed letters we received from the children thanking us for our time and asking more questions. We read the letters together at a subsequent FAWR meeting and knew we had been part of something special that must be continued and expanded into other classrooms.

Thank You Corinne

FAWR would like to extend a heartfelt thank you and farewell to one of its most active members, Corinne Stefanick. Corinne will be moving to Portland, Oregon soon to be closer to her children. She has worked with FAWR from the beginning on efforts to establish the National Wildlife Refuge at Alameda. The success of FAWR's annual A-o Nuevo fundraiser is also due in large part to Corinne's wonderful coordinating efforts every year. And thank you also, Corinne, for keeping wonderful minutes at FAWR meetings. (A big thank you to Mary and Pat for taking up that job.) Corinne, we will miss you. We wish you the best of luck in Portland!



The Path From Dream To Reality

In January of 1997, we were happy to report here that the endangered California Least Tern would be protected on the island of Alameda by the establishment of a new national wildlife refuge. It was a satisfying accomplishment for the volunteers of the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR)



– a committee of GGAS – and their allies after two years of dogged work.

A year later in the GGAS annual report, we noted the continuing achievements of FAWR, despite persistent resistance from some City of Alameda officials, who remained unconvinced that a wildlife refuge would bring substantial benefits to their community. FAWR organized a volunteer docent-led classroom program for second and third graders in Alameda, focused on the natural history of the California Least Tern. Even in its first year, the volunteers managed to reach 52 classrooms, for a total of 1,500 students!

A coordinator for the fledgling

environmental education program, Lani Alo, was hired in August to reach into more classrooms, and to integrate a field component into the existing curriculum in preparation for regular access onto the future refuge lands, part of a former naval air station. Lani has a masters degree in environmental policy, and has been working for the environment and for social change her entire career.

Also underway since August is a 12-month effort to define the scope of the nature interpretive center at Alameda: Who are the primary users of a center? What kinds of programs does the community most desire? Where can a facility be located at a reasonable cost? The answers to these questions are ones that Dana Kokubun, program director, will be seeking in the coming months.

Docents Needed

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge is pleased to announce that it is expanding its *Docent Outreach Program*. The goal of the program is to work collaboratively with the local Alameda community in establishing an educational opportunity for elementary school students to learn about the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. The program's activities will center on classroom, experiential and in-the-field education and volunteerism.

FAWR is currently recruiting

Dana returns to Audubon and to California after five years of focusing on her two children and volunteering as board president for a wetlands advocacy group on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. No stranger to Audubon, she was Hawaii state office director for National Audubon from 1989–1993, when she worked closely with the Hawaii Audubon Society on wetlands and endangered species issues.

Now there is even more good news for the California Least Tern and the other wildlife, like the Brown Pelican, Harbor Seals, and Caspian Terns that call Alameda Point home. With the help of a Bases Venture Grant from the San Francisco Foundation, and a five-year \$125,000 commitment from GGAS, dreams of a nature interpretive center at Alameda are taking a step closer to reality.

classroom docents and will begin offering the program to classrooms within the next two months. An exciting component of the program is FAWR's new relationship with two Healthy Start Collaboratives in Alameda. These partnerships will help further the Program's outreach into the schools and community. For information on the Docent Outreach Program, including docent recruitment, please call Lani Alo, Docent Outreach Coordinator, at (510) 748-2576.

Of All the Nerve

by Cecil Blank

It's well known that a Scrub Jay will take a peanut from your hand if it has been trained to do so. but that can take a lot of time and patience.....more than I was willing to put into it, although I longed to have a jay eat out of my hand.


Last fall when I was feeding birds by spreading bits of oatmeal cookies along the top of a fence near the house, I noticed that the jays often came and took the larger pieces. Then I started putting a large piece on top of the bookcase that stretches four feet farther into the room, just inside the large sliding glass door. One day I noticed that the cookies on the bookcase were disappearing. The jays were flying into the house and taking them!

I began placing the cookie

fragments at the far end of the bookcase, and they still had enough nerve to fly all the way into the room to get the cookies, even if I was sitting and reading beside the bookcase! They would fly in, look me over, and then proceed to choose a preferred cookie.

I then started putting peanuts about: on top of the books, at the base of the books, etc. Sometimes the jay traffic in and out of the house was intense, with both the male and female taking turns at frequent intervals. One day they came so often that they exhausted my supply on the bookcase. I had decided to take a nap on the lounge by the bookcase and I could see the female bustling around looking for more nuts. Finally, she turned around and peered down into my face as if to

say "OK, where are my peanuts?!" After a while she flew from the room, but she didn't go from the house. A few minutes later I got up only to find her in the kitchen! She had found the bag of peanuts, dug her way in and taken one!

Many months have gone by since the jays first visited me and we have become great friends. I sit outside, often with my feet elevated in front of me, and the jays use my feet as a convenient resting spot before going to get some of the peanuts I've put out for them. I just sit and read and let the birds do their own thing at our mutual convince. It's much more of a social thing that way rather than standing outside with a peanut in your hand waiting and waiting. We are all happier this way. 

We Need Help and So Does Our Wildlife

Golden Gate Audubon's ability to help protect the increasingly threatened wildlife in the Bay Area is dependent upon you, our members. Our East Bay and San Francisco Conservation Committee members are our front line team helping to defend the little remaining wildlife habitat that is left to our birds and other critters.

We need your help to keep

these committees active. The work isn't arduous and the rewards are great.

What does it take?

Each Committee meets once a month. The San Francisco Committee meets the first Monday evening of every month, at 7:30 PM, at one of its member's house. The East Bay Committee meets the second Monday of every month at the GGAS Office in Berkeley, again at 7:30 PM.

We discuss issues and keep informed about what's happening in our neck of the woods. We take positions on issues of concern. Individual members can attend City Council meetings, or read environmental documents and comment on them. GGAS staff help out and attend all meetings and provide as much support as possible.

We have a good time. We do good deeds. When successful we

GGAS Has Some Wonderful Friends

Golden Gate Audubon has been blessed this year through the generosity of its friends.

We are very grateful to Mrs. Bessie Slonaker Diefenderfer for thinking of us in her will. Thanks to her very thoughtful consideration GGAS has received over \$20,000 from Mrs. Diefenderfer's estate. The donation will allow us to greatly expand our educational and conservation programs.

We send our condolences and most sincere appreciation to Mrs. Bessie Slonaker Diefenderfer's family.

We were also thrilled to receive a \$20,000 grant from the Donor Advised Fund of the Tides Foundation. This grant was specifically made to help us implement our Birds in the Balance program. Birds in the Balance is a National Audubon

get to experience that rare and unique sense of a well-being that comes from knowing that you have once again helped save a part of our natural world from destruction.

Come and join us. Call us for the location of our next meeting in San Francisco. Our office number is 510-843-2222. In the East Bay just show up at the GGAS Office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, for our next East Bay Conservation Committee meeting, October 12.

We look forward to seeing you. Thanks, Arthur Feinstein.

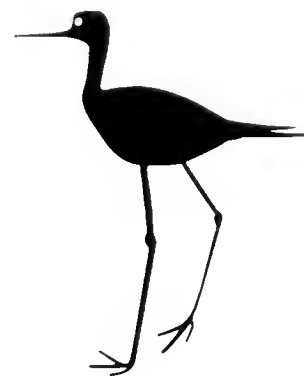
Society program whose goal is to preserve neotropical migratory songbird habitat emphasizing riparian (i.e. streamside) and breeding habitat.

This grant was most timely. Many of you are aware of the proposed Gateway Project (now called Montenara Project) in Orinda. This project would build several hundred high-end residential units and a championship style golf course in one of the most wonderful of our remaining undeveloped East Bay valleys. Gateway Valley is about 980 acres in size and has over five miles of streams and over 7 acres of rare wetlands and seeps. Most of this riparian and wetland habitat is threatened by this project, which proposes to essentially level much of the valley with fill in order to accommodate a golf course.

Along the valley's wonderful riparian corridors can be found many neotropical migratory songbirds such as the Wilson and Orange-crowned warblers. Some of these songbirds, such as the Orange-crowned and Wilson Warblers, are breeding in the Valley.

We will use part of the money from this grant to help us hire consultants and lawyers to aid us in preserving the rare and wonderful riparian habitat found in the beautiful valley.

We are also looking at improvements to the riparian habitat in McClaren Park and Glen Park in San Francisco. Most people think of San Francisco as

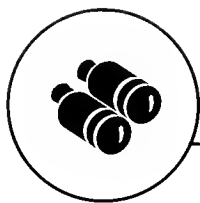


densely populated and assume it has no wildlife. Well, the truth is often stranger than one would think. Over 400 species of birds pass through San Francisco every year. Many breed in San Francisco. It's actually a thriving avian habitat and with a lot of help it can be made a lot better. We're now in a position to do our best to help it along. Our thanks to the Tides Foundation and donor who have entrusted us with the happy job of improving habitat for our neotropical migratory songbirds.

You Too Can Help GGAS

Yes, you can help GGAS protect and conserve our wildlife. You can help us bring nature into the classroom as we are doing in Alameda and you can help us continue to bring all of us into nature, as we have for 81 years through our field trip program.

You can do this by thinking of us when you are planning for the future. For example when you are drafting your will, consider leaving a bequest to GGAS to help us continue our work into the future. We'll appreciate it and so will the wildlife that benefit from our efforts.



July 18 - August 28, 1998

Mid-summer began as a comparatively quiet time, in contrast to the large influx of rarities reported in last month's column. However, as the period progressed, exciting finds seemed to accelerate, with 8 CBRC review species including one with no previously accepted North American records. It is important to remember that many of the unusual sightings greeted with jubilation by birders and attributed to El Niño may actually reflect population movements due to disastrous reductions in food supply and reproduction (eg, see *Audubon* for July-August, 1998, p. 18). By mid-to-

late August, the normal migration of shorebirds and some landbirds, especially wood warblers, into Northern California was beginning to be noted, adding to the variety of observations.

Albatross to Frigatebirds

Black-footed Albatross were reported in good numbers from various pelagic trips, including 14, 12, and 18 birds on Monterey Bay trips Aug. 8, 9 and 15 (DLSh), 15 others on a trip out from Sausalito Aug. 16 (MMo), and high counts of 30 on both an Aug. 15 Cordell Banks trip and an Aug. 28 Bodega Canyon trip (DN). Another individual was seen from shore at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN Aug. 18 (BN). A juvenile **Short-tailed Albatross**, *Phoebastria albatrus*, was found on the Aug. 28 Bodega Canyon pelagic trip (DN). This Asian species, common prior to 1900, was nearly extirpated by Japanese plume hunters and is now very rare in the North Pacific, with fewer than 10 records during this century (Small, 1994). Another of this species was found 2-3 years ago at Cordell Banks by the same observer (DN). A high count of 50 Northern Fulmars was noted on the Aug. 15 Cordell Banks trip (DN). One of the best birds of the period was a **Bulwer's Petrel**, *Bulweria bulwerii*, well-seen and photographed on a July 26 MTY Bay pelagic trip (JD, BM, DLSh). Photographs of this sighting by Bert McKee and Richard Ternullo are posted on Joe Morlan's website: <http://fogccsf.cca.us/%7Ejmorlan>.

Until now, there have been no accepted records for this species, normally found in the tropical Pacific and Atlantic, for North America, let alone CA.

Consistent with previous years, the first report of a Flesh-footed Shearwater for the season was Aug. 28, from the Bodega Canyon pelagic trip (DN). High count for Buller's Shearwater was 100 on an Aug. 14 Farallones trip (AH). Sooty Shearwaters were seen in large numbers offshore, eg, "hundreds of thousands" streaming past Great Beach, PRNS, MRN, Aug. 19 (RS). The shearwater species of the month was undoubtedly represented by the 3 **Manx Shearwaters**, *Puffinus puffinus*, seen on the Aug. 8 Monterey Bay pelagic trip (DLSh). A single bird was also sighted on the Aug. 9 trip on Monterey Bay waters (DLSh). This unusual species has been reported 8 times (approximately 18 birds) in northern California waters since August of 97! Sixteen Black-vented Shearwaters were found on the Aug. 8 and two on the Aug. 15 Monterey pelagic trips (DLSh), and individual sightings occurred Aug. 8 at Pigeon Pt., SM and at Pescadero Beach, SM (KM).

Trips to the Cordell Banks Jul. 25 and Aug. 15 recorded a total of 3 Wilson's Storm Petrels (DN), Monterey Bay trips on Aug. 8 and 16 had a total of 4 (DLSh), and there were 2 on the Aug. 28 Bodega Canyon trip (DN). High counts of *Oceanodroma* species were 45 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels on the Jul. 25 Cordell Banks trip

Abbreviations for Observers: AB, Alan Barron; FB, Florence Bennett; HC, Hugh Colter; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; AE, Art Edwards; AEi, Al Eisner; TE, Todd Esterlea; HF, Harry Fuller; JG, Jim Gaines; GG, George Griffith; KG, Ken Gross; MH, Marilyn Hamiter; KH, Keith Hansen; MHa, Mary Haveman; GH, Gjon Hazzard; DH, David Hoffman; AH, Alan Hopkins; LH, Lisa Hug; AJ, Al Jaramillo; CL, Cindy Lieurance; JL, Jim Lomax; CLo, Calvin Lou; JLu, John Luther; MM, Mike Mammoser; BM, Bert McKee; KM, Kevin McKereghan; MMe, Mona Mena; PM, Peter Metropulos; MOB, Many Observers; MMo, Mike Moran; JM, Joe Morlan; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; DM, Dan Murphy; CN, Christy Nelson; DN, Dan Nelson; BN, Bill Noble; PN, Paul Noble; TO, Trent Orr; AP, Alexandra Plasad; PP, Peter Pyle; KQ, Kevin Quigley; BR, Bob Reiling; SR, Steve Rottenborn; AR, Andrew Rush; TR, Tom Ryan; BS, Barry Sauppe; DS, Doug Shaw; DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater; RS, Rich Stallcup; GS, Gary Strachen; ES, Emily Strauss; ST, Scott Terrill; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; IT, Irene Tomossi; TT, Thors Thorsten; DW, Dave Weber; DWe, Diane Westburg; JW, John Westlake; AW, Anna Wilcox; DWi, David Wimpfheimer; AWi, Adam Winer

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBRC, California Bird Records Committee; CC, Contra Costa; CCRS, Coyote Creek Riparian Station; DN, Del Norte; LAK, Lake; MAD, Madera; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MNO, Mono; MTY, Monterey; PLA, Placer; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SBT, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; TUO, Tuolumne.

(DN), 2000 Ashy Storm Petrels and 1520 Black Storm Petrels on the Aug. 16 Monterey Bay trip (DLSh). Least Storm Petrels totaled at least 11 over 3 Monterey Bay trips held Aug. 8, 9 and 16 (DLSh) and there were 20 viewed during a pelagic trip from Sausalito Aug. 16 (MMo).



The **Masked Booby**, *Sula dactylatra*, first reported June 19 on Ano Nuevo Island, SM, was seen frequently until at least August 6 (JW, MOB). Observations of Magnificent Frigatebirds continued. Two immature individuals were seen near Davenport, SCZ, July 20 and 21 (DWe, GS fide RT, BM), another flew over Bodega Head, SON, Jul. 21 (KQ fide DLSh), and yet another flew past the Cliffhouse, SE, Jul. 21 (HC). Two other birds were at Bolinas, MRN, Jul. 22 (KH) and at Angel Island, MRN, Jul. 22 (fide Oceanic Society), respectively.

Bitterns to Murrelets

A least bittern, rare in summer, was seen at the Olema Marsh, MRN, Jul. 25 and Aug. 3 (CL, KH),

and 3-4 others were found there on Aug. 9 (TO) and again on Aug. 11 and 15 (FB, KG), suggesting the possibility that they may have bred there. An immature Little Blue Heron was spotted Jul. 29 at Don Edwards S.F. Bay National Wildlife Refuge, ALA, (JL). Two White-faced Ibis, also rare on the coast in summer, were at Crittenden Marsh, SCL, Aug. 6 (BR), and one remained Aug. 8 (MHa). Another White-faced Ibis was at the Carmel River. Mouth, MTY, Aug. 26, quite unusual for this location (MPRBA), and 6 flew over Alviso, SCL, Aug. 27 (ST). A molting Oldsquaw was near the Dumbarton Bridge, SM, Jul. 19 (RT) and another individual sum-mering near Moss Landing Harbor, MTY, was reported Jul. 22 (MPRBA). A Merlin, uncommon in August, was at El Granada, SM, Aug. 16 (BS fide RT).

Golden-Plovers began their fall appearance, with an American Golden-Plover sighted at the Modesto Sewage Ponds, STA, Aug. 21 and two at the same place Aug. 25 (JG). Pacific Golden-Plovers were more abundant, with two at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin, SCL, Jul. 31 (AEi) and one there Aug. 1, 3 and 4 (AW, MM, MH). Other single birds were at Pescadero Marsh, SM, Aug. 14 (BM), at Don Edwards S. F. Bay Wildlife Refuge, ALA, Aug. 15 (CN), at the mouth of Steinberger Slough, SM, Aug. 18 and 23 (RT, AEi), and in North MTY Co. Aug. 23 (MPRBA). In accordance with their expected late summer influx, a total of at least 30 Lesser

Yellowlegs were reported from ALA, MRN, MTY, PLA, SM, SCL, SON, and STA counties. Similarly, "solitary" Solitary Sandpipers were found at Brick Lake, ALA, Jul. 23 and 25 (AE, AEi), at Bridgeport Sewage Ponds, MNO, Aug. 10 (DWi), in Alviso, SCL, Aug. 16 (DS), and near the Eastside Bypass Canal, MAD, Aug. 24 (JL). Semipalmated Sandpipers put in their usual summer appearance, with at least 18 birds reported over ALA, MER, MRN, SM, SCL, and SON counties.

A **Little Stint**, *Calidris minuta*, was reported from Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Aug. 9 (IT). This Eurasian species is an extremely rare coastal transient in spring and fall. Hopefully this observation will be submitted to the CBRC for review. At least 21 Baird's Sandpipers were reported from ALA, MRN, MTY, SM, SCL, SCZ, SON, and STA counties. Single Pectoral Sandpipers were seen at Ravenswood Nature Preserve, Palo Alto, SM, Aug. 19 (RT) and near Johnson's Oyster Co., MRN, Aug. 28 (TT). Stilt Sandpipers were seen at two locations in SCL county, one at Calabazas Marsh Aug. 16-27 (MM, MOB), and another in Alviso Aug. 27-28 (SR). Several reports of Ruffs, an Old World species uncommonly seen before the fall, also came from SCL county. A molting female was at CCRS, Aug. 1-23 (DW, MOB). One to two Ruffs were in Alviso Aug. 15-17 (AEi, MOB) and another two were at Calabazas Marsh

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Aug. 16 (MM). Other Ruffs in rare locations were on Brewer Rd., PLA, Aug. 5 (TE) and near Gustine, MER, Aug. 11 (JLu).

Single South Polar Skuas were reported from pelagic trips on Monterey Bay Aug. 8 (DLSh), out from Sausalito Aug. 16 (MMo), and from the Aug. 28 Bodega Canyon trip (DN). The most unusual Jaeger sighting was a Long-tailed Jaeger far inland, at Lake Don Pedro, TUO, Aug. 26 (TR fide GH). Others of this species were seen on Monterey Bay pelagic trips on Aug. 15, 16, and 22 (DLSh). One Parasitic Jaeger was seen off Ocean Beach, SF, July 18 (HF) and two were found off Drake's Beach, PRNS, MRN, Aug. 26 (RS).

An early Mew Gull was at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Aug. 19 (RS). A molting Laughing Gull was discovered at Stinson Beach, MRN, Aug. 18-22 (AR, KH, ES). This observation is potentially a third county record for the species. A high count for Sabine's Gull was 914 birds recorded on the Aug. 15 Monterey Bay pelagic trip (DLSh). Unusual in location was a single Sabine's Gull at New Chicago Marsh, Alviso, SCL, Aug. 18 (FB). Three Bonaparte's Gulls, uncommon inland in August, were at the Modesto Sewage Ponds, STA, Aug. 25 (JG). The highest number of Arctic Terns for the period was 199 recorded on the Aug. 15 Monterey Bay outing (DLSh). A Black Tern appeared at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant Ponds, SCL, Aug. 19 (PM). Black

Skimmers were again in evidence, with one flying over El Granada, SM, July 19 (PM), one at Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM, Aug. 1 (CL), one at Doran Beach, SON, Aug. 2 (GG), and two more over Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, Aug. 11 (TT).

A **Long-billed Murrelet**, *Brachyramphus perdix*, was found off Point St. George, DN, Aug. 22-23 (AB). This Asiatic species, a recent split from the Marbled Murrelet, was last seen during December of last year at Muir Beach, MRN. A photograph from the 1997 sighting by Alan Hopkins appears on the Joe Morlan website. A highest-ever one-day count of 40 Xantus's Murrelets from a MTY Bay pelagic trip was recorded Jul. 26 (DLSh). Two Craveri's Murrelets were seen on that same outing, and six more on the Aug. 15 Monterey Bay trip (DLSh).

Cuckoos to Grackles

A male Yellow-billed Cuckoo was found on the porch of a

Richmond, CC, residence Jul. 18 (MMe). This report is the first county record for the species. One of the best land bird finds was that of a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, *Archilochus colubris*, which is an exceedingly rare visitor from the Eastern U.S. This fourth state record occurred on Aug. 25 at the Farallones, where the bird was banded (PP fide KH). What was presumably the same bird was observed Aug. 26-27 near the PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse (RS, AWi). El Granada, SM, hosted a rare summer Calliope Hummingbird Aug. 16 (BS fide RT). On that date, an early Red-breasted Sapsucker was also found in El Granada (BS fide RT). An Eastern Kingbird, uncommon in August, was at the Suisun Marsh Pheasant Club, SOL, Aug. 16 (PN), and there was another near the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, Aug. 27 (AWi). A very rare early fall transient, an adult Least Flycatcher, was seen Aug. 25 at the Farallones (PP fide KH). Most of the CA records for this species are from the Farallones (Small, 1994). A Tropical Kingbird, also unusual in August, was seen 9 mi. N. of Ft. Bragg, MEN, Aug. 27 (DT).

The rarest flycatcher reported was a calling **Alder Flycatcher**, *Empidonax alnorum*, seen near the Mendoza Ranch, PRNS, MRN Aug. 26 (RS). This species breeds in Canada and the Northeastern U. S. It is an exceedingly rare visitor to California and in the field can be distinguished by its call from the Willow Flycatcher. A very early Say's Phoebe was also





at PRNS, MRN, on Aug. 26 (RS). Plumbeous vireos were reported from two locations, one at the Carmel River mouth, MTY, Aug. 23 and 27 (MPRBA) and another at Bear Valley, PRNS, MRN, Aug. 24-25 (ES, RS). A Sage Thrasher was at PRNS, MRN, Aug. 26 (RS). Unusual Wood Warbler reports were almost non-existent until the end of August, when they were in full swing (see chart), promising an exciting fall migration period to come.

A Summer Tanager was in the Limantour Area, PRNS, MRN, Aug. 27 (Dan Murphy). A Harris's Sparrow, for which summer records are exceptional, was at Bodega Head, SON, Aug. 14 (observer not recorded). A sign of fall was the Brewer's Sparrow at San Pedro Creek, SM, Aug. 28 (JM). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen at San Pedro Creek, SM, Aug. 28 (JM), and a Lark Bunting was at Gazos Creek Rd., SM, Aug. 27 (BM). A first spring male Indigo Bunting was at CCRS, SCL, Jul. 18 (AJ) and another male continued at Piper Slough, CC, Jul. 28 (SG). Yet another sign of approaching fall were two Yellow-headed Blackbirds found along the coast, one in Alviso, SCL, Aug. 27 (SR) and another in Redwood Shores, SM, Aug. 24 (RT). Great-tailed Grackles

Warbler sightings				
Tennessee Warbler				
Aug. 28	Fort Funston, SF		DM	
Northern Parula				
Jul. 19	(2) BSOL, MTY		MPRBA	
(first reported in June)				
Magnolia Warbler				
Aug. 26	Lighthouse, PRNS, MRN		RS	
Aug. 27	Fishdocks, PRNS, MRN		TT	
Prairie Warbler				
Aug. 25	Farallones		PP fide KH	
Blackpoll Warbler				
Aug. 27	Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN		AWi	
American Redstart				
Aug. 22	Mt. Davidson, SF		Clo	
Aug. 26	(6) PRNS, MRN		RS	
Aug. 27	Russian Gulch, SON		LH	
Aug. 27	(2) Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN		AWi	
Aug. 28	(3) New Willows, PRNS, MRN		TT	
Aug. 28	Old Woman's Ck. Rd., SM		BM	
Northern Waterthrush				
Aug. 22	Banded at BSOL, MTY		MPRBA	
Aug. 25-28	Middle Lake, SF		KM, DM, DN	
Aug. 26	(2) PRNS, MRN		RS	
Aug. 28	PRNS, MRN		TT	
Aug. 27	Gazos Ck. Rd., SM		BM	
Canada Warbler				
Aug. 27-28	Owl Canyon, SON		DH, DS	

successfully nested at San Felipe Lake SBT, with 2 or 3 young present Jul. 21 (DLSh). Seven of these were also near Gustine, MER, Aug. 11 (JLu), another 7 at Fairview Middle School Slough, MTY, Aug. 17 (MPRBA) and one at Clear Lake St. Park, LAK, Aug. 25 (SR).

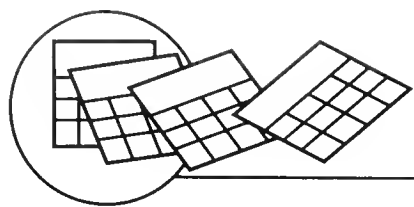
Brewer and the Blackbird

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Ridgway co-authored the monumental three volume History of North American Birds (1874-84). Brewer's specialty in bird study was nesting and eggs. As late as 1940 Brewer's pioneering observations were still being quoted by Arthur Bent, e.g. on the Common Nighthawk, "In 1870 and 1871 Dr. T. M. Brewer (1874) found a number of instances of this bird nesting on the flat mansard roofs of Boston."

Brewer's only daughter, Lucy, was named for Audubon's wife. In turn a new tropical bird was named for Lucy Brewer by her father's friend, George Lawrence. It is the *Amazilia luciae*, the Honduran Emerald.

A second bird was also named for Brewer himself. In 1856 Philadelphian John Cassin found this new sparrow among the Clay-colored Sparrow specimens in a drawer at the Academy where he was a curator. Naming the new species for Brewer, Cassin wrote that he had "much pleasure in embracing the present opportunity to dedicate a bird of the United States to my esteemed friend Thomas M. Brewer, M.D., of Boston, one who to the highest abilities and social qualities adds an ardor in devotion to Ornithological science rarely paralleled."



Ocotber Meeting

Midway Atoll and the Albatross

More than a million albatross return each November to nest on Midway Atoll. No longer a U. S. Navy base, the islands are now managed by US Fish and Wildlife as a national wildlife refuge. The Oceanic Society is conducting monitoring studies on seabirds, Hawaiian Monk Seals, and Spinner Dolphins to ensure their reproductive success as the main island opens for tourism. Long-time Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society members Sue and Jim Liskovec spent ten days on this tiny Pacific island last November as seabird study participants. Please join us to ride the Pacific winds with the albatross of Midway and get a fabulous "bird's eye view" of this newest birding destination.

Thursday, September 15, 1998

7:30 p.m.

The Josephine Randall Museum

San Francisco



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